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No. V.

BURMESE LACQUER.

THE Society have received some bottles of Burmese lacquer, sent from Serampore by Dr. Carey to H. T. Colebrook, Esq., and by that gentleman presented to the Society.

It is used by the Burmese in varnishing cups, bowls, and other vessels made of wood, and is also employed instead of size in gilding their pagodas. It is probably the unprepared juice of a tree, and on certain persons produces the same effects as the juice of the *rhus toxicodendron*; that is, it causes, when handled, a swelling and intolerable itching of the body, which lasts some days.

The liquor, in the state in which the Society received it, is a black substance, of the consistence of tar, on which floats a small quantity of somewhat turbid, watery fluid. Its property of affecting the human body appears to have ceased, for it has been freely handled, and even rubbed by the finger on wood, without producing any inconvenience.

A thin coating of it, laid on the surface of wood, &c., requires long exposure to the sun, or to the damp air of a cellar, to become dry. It is not possible, therefore, to

apply it in the same manner as European varnish is laid on ; that is, in from twelve to twenty successive coats, the preceding being dried before the next is laid on. Farther experiments, however, will be made, and the result, if satisfactory, will be published in the next volume.